Farmers' Champion

Successor to Indiahoma Champion

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Progressive Farming

This Department is devoted to those methods that are so wonderfully revolutionizing Agriculture

FALL PLOWING ON DRY FARM

Fourteen-Inch Gang Plow Should Average Five Acres Daily or 130 Acres in Month.

(By W. R. PORTER, Superintendent North Dakota Demonstration Farm.)

Fall plowing should be done as early as possible, as more weed seeds are started in early plowing, the stubble decays better and more nitrates are formed and other plant food is liberated in larger quantities. Early fall plowing can be plowed deeper than late fall plowing without so much soil at once from below. Early barley stubble can be plowed to good advantage before the general wheat harvest. A 14-inch gang plow traveling 18 miles a day will plow five acres. In a week it would turn over 30 acres of land. If there is any delay in threshing or stacking the grain due to wet weather or high winds, the gang plow should be started, even if the shocks are on the fields. They can be set over on the plowed land with but little difficulty by the operator of the plow. From 75 to 125 shocks will have to be set over a day or from four to seven shocks per mile the plow travels. A shock can readily be set over in from 60 to 90 seconds, thus taking from four to ten minutes per mile. The horses should have this much time to rest, so there is practically no lost time in plowing land before the shocks are removed—it is simply an inconvenience for the operator of the plow, as he has to stop frequently and set a grain shock over on the plowed land. Set the gang plows going as early as you can and keep them going every day you possibly can until the fall plowing is done. A 14-inch gang plow should average five acres a day, or 130 acres a month. On lands that are not inclined to drift or pack down hard a section of a harrow can be hauled after each plow to very good advantage.

DEEP PLOWING ON DRY FARM

Many Farmers Do Not Realize Possibilities of Their Soil—Plant Food Locked Up.

The majority of farmers do not realize the full possibilities of their soil because they do not unlock by their process of cultivation the plant food that is stored a few inches beneath the surface of the earth.

Repeated plowing at approximately the same level forms a sort of floor through which the plant roots pass with difficulty. Beneath this floor is an abundance of the elements which are necessary for plant life, and unless the tiny roots are allowed to reach down and make use of this food it is of little avail in increasing the yield of the field. The usual practice of plowing has another disadvantage in that it does not break up the pores of the soil and check the evaporation of moisture.

The most up-to-date methods of cultivation provide for deep plowing, says Kimball's Dairy Farmer. Some manufacturers are making a specialty of machines that turn the soil from 8 to 12 or 14 inches deep, bringing up a new and rich loam upon which the plants may feed. The use of the power plow, which is rapidly increasing, makes it possible to plow to these greater depths.

Still another method of loosening the plant food from lower levels is by the use of explosives. Agricultural blasting is coming to be a science in itself. In horticultural work, as well as in regular farming, the loosening of the soil to a greater depth is found valuable and profitable. Deeper plowing will make the farm larger without changing its boundaries, for it will increase the productive capacity of every acre.

If a Man Said It?

"When women are doing fancy work with their needle they are often doing embroidery with their tongues."—"Maxims and Musings," by the Marchioness Townsend.

PREPARE GROUND FOR WHEAT

Desirable to Double-Disk Immediately After Wheat or Oats Have Been Taken Off the Field.

(By H. M. BAINER.)

As soon as the oats or wheat have been taken off the field, it is desirable to double-disk the ground at once. It will pay well to disk immediately behind the binder or header. If after the binder, the bundles would be thrown off on disked ground. The sooner this work is done after harvest the better; every day's delay means that more moisture is lost.

In case the disking has been done in time, the ground can be plowed at any time later. Some will say "Why not begin plowing at once, instead of wasting time disking?" This would be all right if we could hold the moisture long enough, but usually one or two weeks of hot, dry weather after harvest will dry out the ground too much for plowing. The disk will cover the ground quickly, and will insure holding the moisture until we have time to complete the plowing.

There is no question but that wheat ground should be plowed early. For this reason summer tilled land nearly always outyielding land that is plowed just before seeding time. Wheat requires a firm seed bed. On account of this early preparation should be deeper than later work. Deep plowing just before seeding time is not desirable, as the ground will not have time to become well settled. Early deep preparation is very favorable to wheat production, especially where the ground has had enough moisture to settle it properly.

The wheat roots penetrate this packed soil very readily and are not damaged by gradual settling later, or from an undue loss of moisture on account of too loose soil.

The following data on results of tillage methods on wheat in 1911 on the Kansas experimental farm, as quoted in part from Bulletin No. 176 of that station, can be well applied to southern conditions.

Land plowed July 15 (the right time) seven inches deep (the right depth) gave a yield of 38 1-3 bushels per acre. After paying for the cost of preparation there was left $25.74 per acre.

Land plowed July 15 three inches deep (plowed at the right time, but too shallow) produced 33 1-3 bushels per acre—a net return of $22.32.

Land plowed August 15, seven inches deep, not worked until September 15, showed a yield of 23 2-3 bushels per acre and a net return of $15.34 per acre, after deducting the cost of preparation.

Land plowed at proper depth, seven inches, September 15 (too late) produced 15¾ bushels per acre and gave a net return of $9.08 per acre.

Land plowed three inches deep (too shallow) September 15 (too late) gave a yield of 14½ bushels, a net return of $8.52 per acre, after deducting cost of preparation.

Land disked, but not plowed, cost $1.95 per acre fo rpreparation and produced 4¼ bushels per acre. The crop when sold returned $1.47 per acre over the cost of preparation of ground.

After the seed bed had been prepared, whether before seeding time or after, the surface should not be allowed to crust. The common peg tooth harrow or weeder should break this crust as often as it forms, until the wheat gets too large to work. Do not let the ground get too dry before harrowing, as it is likely to work up too fine and make it liable to blow.

ALFALFA IS PROLIFIC CROP

Reasonably Hardy and Yield Is Considerably Above Alsike or Millet—Most Succulent Clover.

(By WALTER B. LEUTE.)

There were three cuttings of alfalfa last summer, even in the drought-stricken districts of the middle west. Farther south and west three to five crops were secured. This proves once more that alfalfa is the most prolific of clovers and that it is reasonably hardy. Its total yield is considerably above that of alsike or millet, both of which afford heavy and valuable fodder crops.

The yield of alfalfa averages more than a ton to the acre for each cutting, and two tons is not unusual in a favorable season. Even in the more northerly states, with their short season, the three crops may be counted on to produce four tons per acre, the aggregate value being upwards of $60.

There has been a general movement to produce alfalfa in the great dairy districts of the northwest. Nearly every farmer now has a good-sized field of it in localities where it has never been tried, up to two years ago.

With the hay market on the highest level ever known, it is well for farmers to know all about this prolific and succulent clover.

Good Points in a Colt.

It is more or less a case of speculation to judge what the mature horse will be by judging him as a colt. Even after years of close observation in watching colts mature a great many mistakes will be made. There are certain things that are indicative of the colt's future. For instance, expect to find the colt's head large, and a little out of proportion to the rest of the body, with legs somewhat too long, if he is to mature into a good-sized horse. In the draft colt there should be plenty of size and symmetry of body. The bone should be clean, flat and flinty. The muscling of the body and limbs should show strength. There should be an abundance of muscle, especially at the forearm.

DRY FARMING IS NECESSITY

Vast Area Cannot Be Irrigated and Must Remain Uninhabitable Unless Dry Farm Methods Used.

(By J. H. WORST, North Dakota Agricultural College.)

The fact that nearly half the earth's surface is visited with less than twenty inches of annual precipitation makes dry farming a necessity. But a fraction of this vast area is susceptible of irrigation under any circumstances. What cannot be irrigated must be cultivated by dry-farming methods or remain uninhabitable and practically useless, for human genius cannot remove natural barriers, such as mountain ranges, which place a limit upon precipitation. It can, however, suggest methods of agriculture that may be adjusted to local conditions; methods of tillage that will prevent the unnecessary evaporation of soil moisture, together with the breeding of plants, themselves economic of moisture.

These factors taken together will tend to make agriculture not only successful, but profitable with less rainfall than in humid districts where, as a matter of fact, the total precipitation during the year is frequently far in excess of the needs of the growing crops. Moreover, excess of moisture is likely to prove as destructive of crops as deficiency of moisture and far more injurious to the land. The fact must be admitted that the swamps and the sea receive a tremendous annual toll of plant food resulting from the "run-off" of humid countries. This loss of fertility, which is beyond estimate, must be made good by some means, so that between restoring lost fertility and installing drainage systems, the humid countries are quite as severely taxed as the semi-arid countries.

Liquid Excrement.

Great value should be placed on the liquid excrement. Some arrangement should be made for its entire preservation and use, either by the use of absorbents or otherwise. Each man should work out his own plans for this purpose in conformity with his surroundings. And where it has not been done, a careful study of this matter may prove interesting, profitable and of sanitary value.

Ticks on Sheep.

Be sure there are no ticks on the ewes. It is very costly to winter ticks and it doesn't pay. It is impossible to fatten a sheep infested with ticks. Look out for them.

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